



THE 1996 NATIONAL CENSUS OF PINK-FOOTED AND GREYLAG GEESE IN BRITAIN

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SUMMARY

The 37th consecutive census of Pink-footed and Greylag Geese in Britain took place in autumn and early winter 1996. Two discrete counts were undertaken, recording maxima of 234,379 Pink-footed Geese in October and 79,576 Greylag Geese in November. The October counts for Pink-footed Geese were carried out under good conditions and no major sites were missed. The November counts for Greylag Geese are believed to be accurate due to good coverage, co-ordination and counting conditions. The suggested population estimates are **235,000 Pink-footed Geese** and **80,000 Greylag Geese**. The Pink-footed Goose total represents a 17% increase compared with 1995, whilst the Greylag Goose population estimate has decreased by 4% compared to the previous year. Both species had a reasonable breeding season in 1996 with 18.8% and 19.9% young for Pink-footed and Greylag Geese respectively. Mean brood size was 2.4 young/pair for Pink-footed and 2.6 young/pair for Greylag Geese. The regional distribution of the birds and the importance of key sites are discussed. Annual hunting statistics from Iceland suggest that in 1996, an estimated 36,500 Greylag and 12,000 Pink-footed Geese were reported shot (similar figures to those reported in 1995). The impact of this level of hunting, especially for Greylag Geese, is discussed.

INTRODUCTION AND METHODS

The 37th consecutive national census of Pink-footed Geese *Anser brachyrhynchus* and Greylag Geese *Anser anser* in Britain was conducted in autumn and early winter 1996. The methods followed previous years with, as in 1990 to 1995, two discrete counts being made, one in October when Pink-footed Geese tend to be more concentrated at fewer sites, and one in November when it is hoped that Greylag Geese have completed their migration from Iceland. The majority of observations were conducted by volunteers, usually made as dawn or dusk counts at known roost sites, although in a very few areas, where the locations of roost sites were poorly known or where roost use was known to be infrequent, daytime counts of feeding birds were made. Assessments of the number of young present in autumn flocks and the average brood size per family were made by experienced counters at a number of sites in Scotland during the period 1 October to 15 November. This report provides a brief overview of the results of this census; more detailed information on individual regions or sites is available from WWT on request.

WEATHER CONDITIONS AND COVERAGE

Count conditions on 12/13 October were reasonable in most areas. Despite localised poorer weather conditions in some areas (eg Fife) coverage was thought to be good. The weather on 9/10 November was generally good with ground frost in many north-east sites. The full moon was on 26 October and 25 November and this hopefully, had little effect on counts in both months. There were very few reports of night feeding where birds may have roosted on fields rather than

flying to lochs.

A total of 128 sites was covered by the census representing a decrease (13%) on the coverage in 1995 however, once again, all of the important sites (see '*principal concentrations*' below) were checked.

Five sites were counted in November but not in October: *Culross East, Edderton Sands, Flanders Moss*, sites in *west Strathearn* and sites in the *Upper Tay*, and six sites were covered in October but not in November: *Castle Loch* and *Hightae Loch* (Lochmaben), *Loch Mullion, Loch Ochiltree, Long Loch*, and *Montrose Basin*. These tended to be sites that either irregularly hold geese or only support small numbers; thus, an omission in either month is thought not to have affected the overall population estimates greatly. Montrose Basin can hold substantial numbers of Pink-footed Geese although the population estimate was based on October counts when a count was recorded at this site.

Some supplementary early October counts showed an early arrival of Pink-footed Geese and quick dispersal from those arrival points. For example, *Dupplin Loch* supported 40,500 on 5 October; *Carsebreck and Rhynd Lochs* held 12,000 on 2 October. These two sites held fewer Pink-footed Geese at the time of the October census (18,500 and 5,570 respectively). Thus, between the first days of October and the second weekend in October numbers at these two sites had fallen from 52,500 to 24,000. Hopefully, however, these early arrivals were located and counted in other locations.

In summary, the weather was reasonable for goose counting on at least one day of each of the count weekends in October and November and, together with good coverage, this assisted in obtaining accurate counts from all key sites for both species.

RESULTS

TOTAL NUMBERS

Pink-footed Geese

The count of 234,379 Pink-footed Geese in Britain in October 1996 (Table 1) represented a 17% increase compared with October 1995 (c.200,000). The 1996 counts reveal a reduction between October and November - an apparent loss of c.70,000 birds (30%). No major Pinkfoot roosts were missed in November (but see above), thus re-enforcing the suggestion by Newton *et al.* (1990) that a more accurate estimate of the Pink-footed Geese population can be obtained in October before birds start to disperse more widely within Britain (Figures 2a & 2b). Interestingly, the difference over the same period in 1994 amounted to c.77,000 birds (30% of the 1994 population estimate).

Greylag Geese

The count of 79,576 Greylag Geese in Britain in November 1996 is the lowest population estimate since 1984 (64,000) and represents a decline of 4% compared with 1995. Between 1985 and 1995 the population estimate was c.90-100,000 but included four major 'dips' in the counts: in 1989 (83,500), 1991 (88,000), 1994 (86,000) and 1995 (82,700). In 1991, 1994 and 1995, counting conditions were generally good and the suggestion was made that there had indeed been a stabilisation, or reduction, in the overall population.

Table 1. The numbers of Pink-footed and Greylag Geese recorded in Great Britain in October and November 1996. The number of sites counted is also given.

| DISTRICT/REGION | OCTOBER | | | NOVEMBER | | |
|---|------------|----------------|---------------|------------|----------------|---------------|
| | Sites | Pinkfeet | Greylag | Sites | Pinkfeet | Greylag |
| Shetland | 0 | nc | nc | 0 | nc | nc |
| Orkney | 6 | 185 | 5045 | 6 | 13 | 9338 |
| Western Isles | 0 | nc | nc | 0 | nc | nc |
| Caithness | + | 110 | 5378 | + | 8 | 5213 |
| Sutherland | 2 | 0 | 600 | 2 | 1 | 1200 |
| Ross & Cromarty | 6 | 374 | 4953 | 7 | 1570 | 7735 |
| Inverness/Nairn | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2400 |
| Badenoch & Strathspey | 2 | 5 | 638 | 2 | 0 | 873 |
| Moray | 2 | 50 | 1700 | 3 | 650 | 8210 |
| Banff & Buchan | 1 | 32,000 | 133 | 1 | 26,980 | 410 |
| Gordon/Aberdeen | 4 | 18,500 | 17,296 | 4 | 7800 | 11,556 |
| Kincardine & Deeside | 1 | 0 | 1244 | 1 | 80 | 16,469 |
| Angus/Dundee | 9 | 10,065 | 1056 | 8 | 16,142 | 630 |
| Perth & Kinross | 17 | 54,103 | 2272 | 18 | 24,951 | 4757 |
| Central | 6 | 1360 | 52 | 7 | 1400 | 447 |
| Fife | 16 | 2576 | 198 | 17 | 5763 | 1630 |
| Argyll & Bute | 4 | 0 | 276 | 4 | 0 | 1693 |
| Glasgow area * | 4 | 60 | 607 | 4 | 0 | 1840 |
| Clydesdale | 1 | 6060 | 0 | 1 | 200 | 0 |
| Stewartry/Wigtown | 3 | 0 | 50 | 3 | 105 | 330 |
| Annan & Eskdale/Nithsdale ** | 4 | 5429 | 42 | 2 | 3160 | 40 |
| East/Midlothian | 4 | 15,360 | 348 | 3 | 4700 | 351 |
| Edinburgh/West Lothian | 1 | 50 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 2159 |
| West Borders/Tweeddale/East Borders *** | 6 | 46,080 | 299 | 1 | 4969 | 0 |
| N England/Humberside | 7 | 1516 | 825 | 7 | 605 | 1990 |
| Cumbria ** | 1 | 4 | 445 | 1 | 4 | 445 |
| Lancashire and Merseyside | + | 37,500 | 0 | + | 28,450 | 0 |
| Lincolnshire | 2 | 889 | 0 | 2 | 1932 | 0 |
| Norfolk | 3 | 2102 | 0 | 3 | 34,180 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 116 | 234,379 | 43,457 | 116 | 163,663 | 79,576 |

* includes Bearsden & Milngavie, Clydebank, Cumbernauld & Kilsyth, Cumnock & Doon Valley, Dumbarton, East Kilbride, Eastwood, Glasgow City, Hamilton, Inverclyde, Kilmarnock & Loudoun, Kyle & Carrick, Monklands, Motherwell, Renfrew and Strathkelvin.

** for convenience, counts from the Solway Firth are included in the Annandale & Eskdale/Nithsdale total even though some birds roost and feed on the Cumbrian side of the estuary.

*** includes Ettrick & Lauderdale, Roxburgh and Berwickshire.

+ - Several feeding sites consolidated

nc - no count received

There were several sites where counts of Greylag Geese in 1996 may not have referred to Icelandic birds (See Discussion in Mitchell & Cranswick 1993). However, these inaccuracies do not affect the November population estimate greatly. In some cases, the numbers of feral or re-introduced Greylag Geese is small but these flocks can be augmented by winter visitors, thus confusing the picture. For example, many of the Greylag Geese roosting at *Loch Inch* (Stranraer) are known to breed locally, yet these are joined in the autumn months by Icelandic visitors.

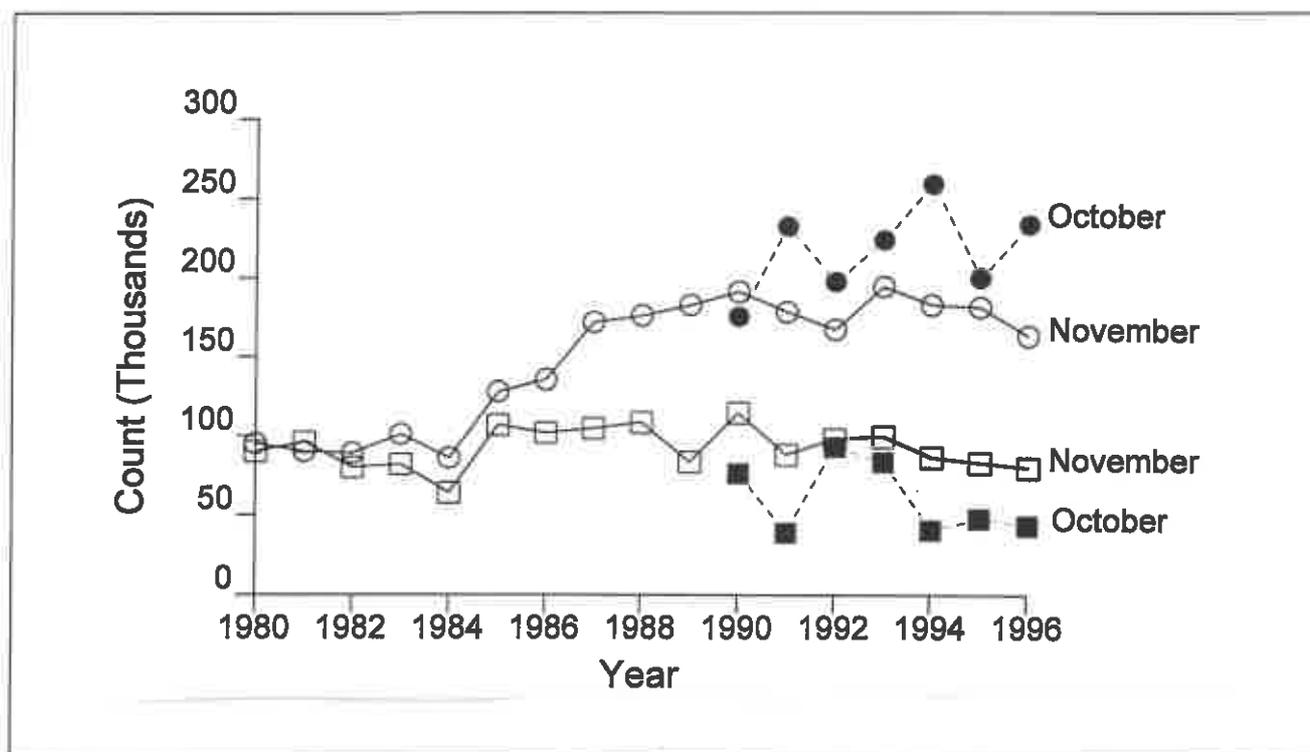


Figure 1. The numbers of Pink-footed Geese (circles) and Greylag Geese (squares) recorded by WWT counts in November (open symbols) and, since 1990, in October (closed symbols).

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION WITHIN BRITAIN

The distribution of Pink-footed and Greylag Geese by region/district in October and November 1996 is shown in Table 1. Table 2 shows the gross regional distribution of geese. Table 3 shows the principal resorts of both species and Figures 2 & 3 shows the distribution of counts during autumn 1996.

Pink-footed Geese

In October, the majority of birds (29.0%) were recorded in East-central Scotland (Tayside, Central and Fife). Just over a quarter was found in South-east Scotland/North-east England (Lothians, Borders and Northumberland) and about one fifth of the total was in North-east Scotland (eastern Grampian). The proportions are very similar to those recorded in 1994 and 1995. As in 1995, there was an early arrival of Pink-footed Geese in South-west Lancashire: c.37,500 were counted there at the time of the October census. Note, too, the rapid movement of birds through North-East Scotland: a decrease from 50,050 birds in October to 20,373 in November. By November, there had been, as expected, a movement south with, for example, increases in East England (Norfolk).

Figure 2b. The distribution of Pink-footed Geese in November 1996

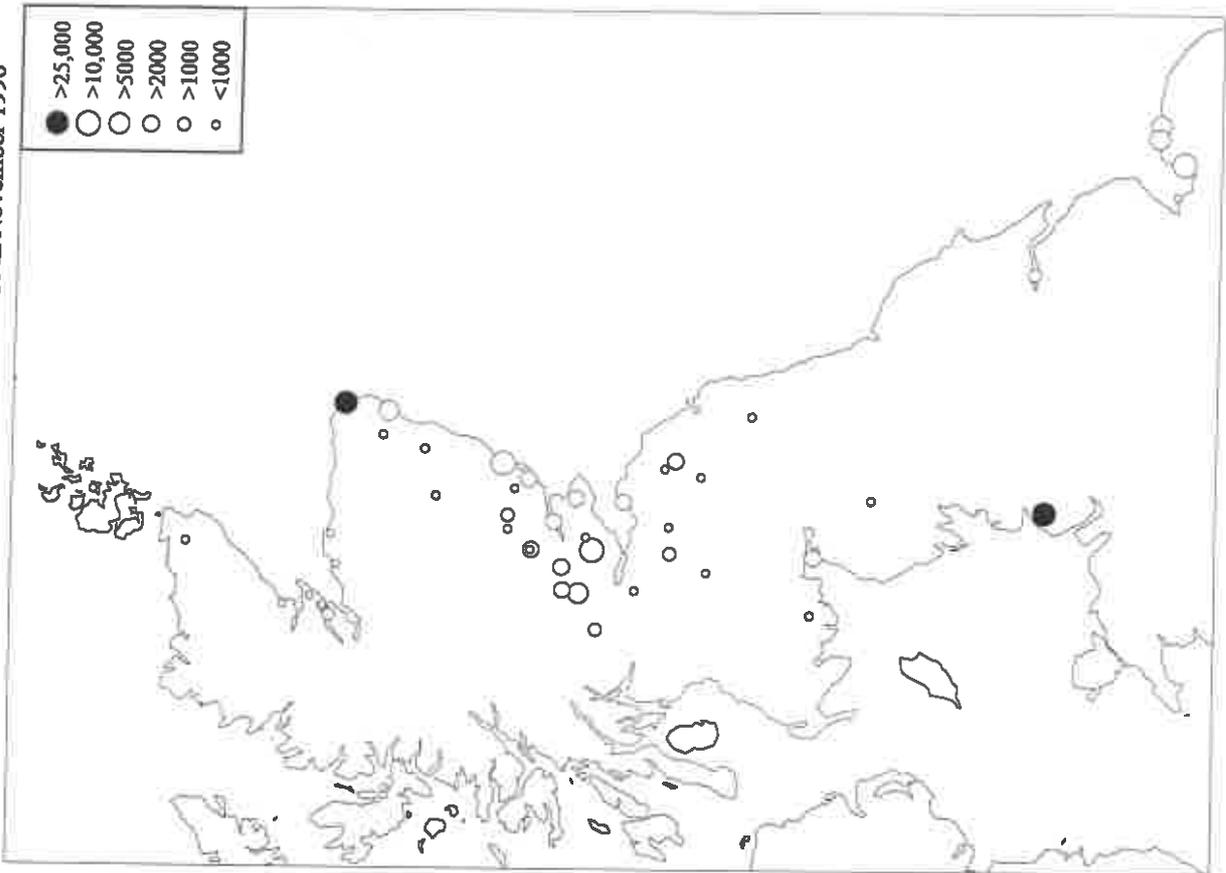


Figure 2a. The distribution of Pink-footed Geese in October 1996

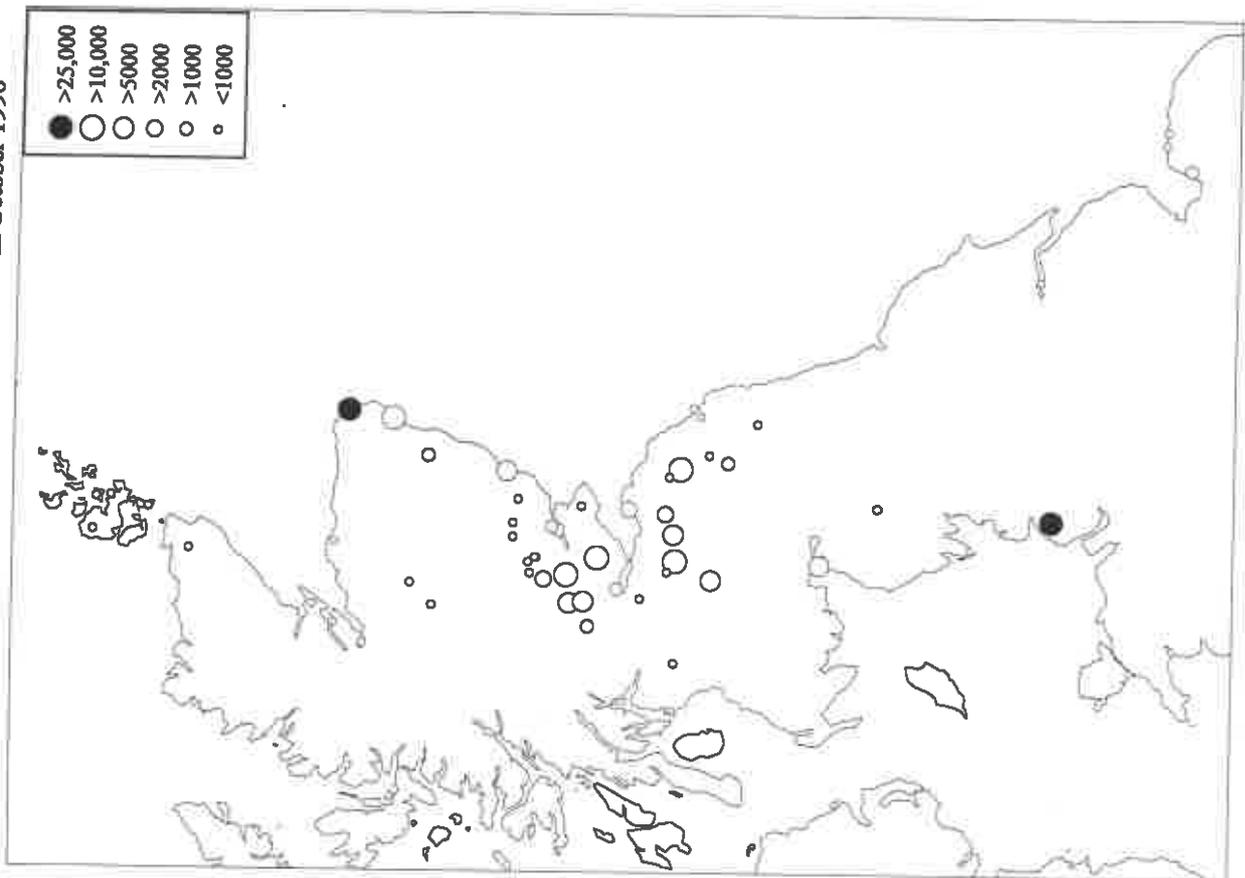


Figure 3a. The distribution of Greylag Geese in October 1996

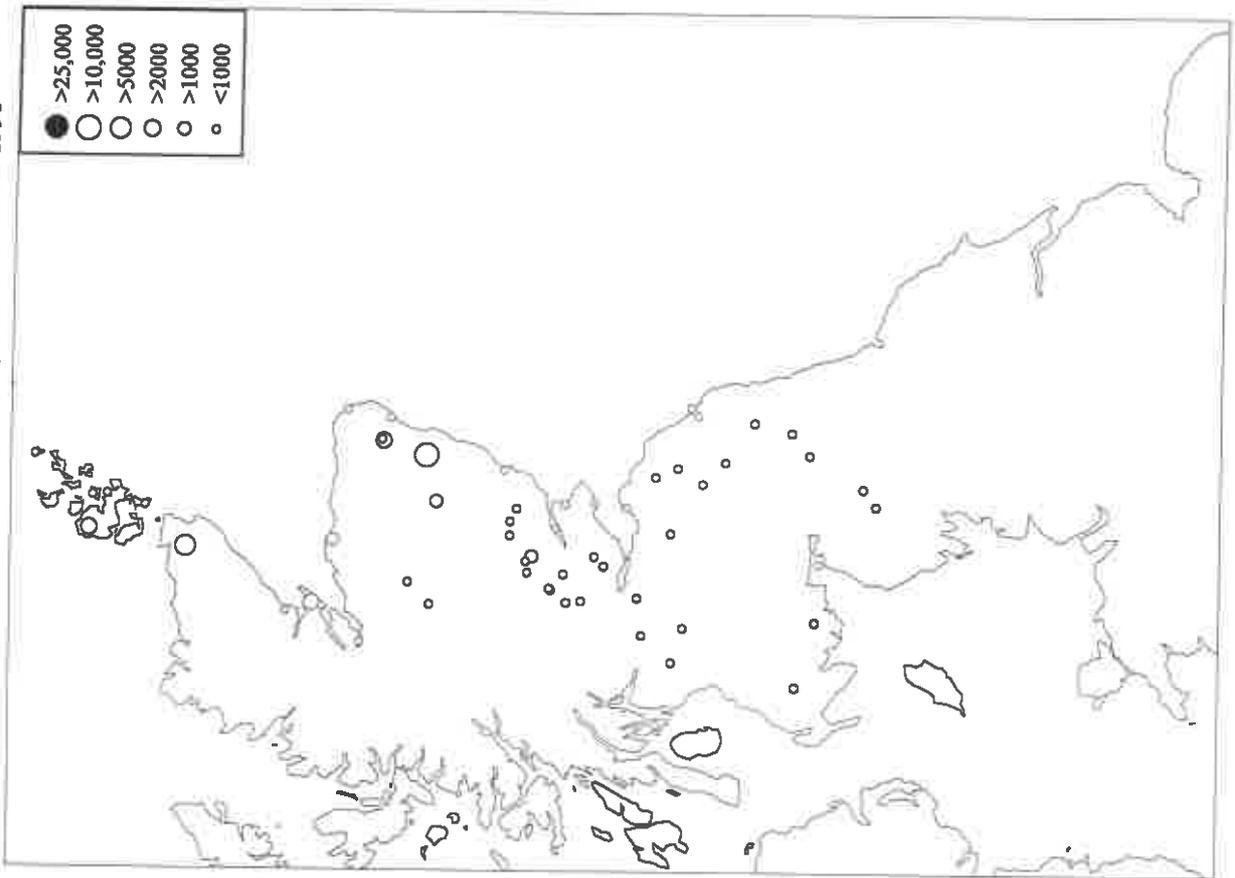
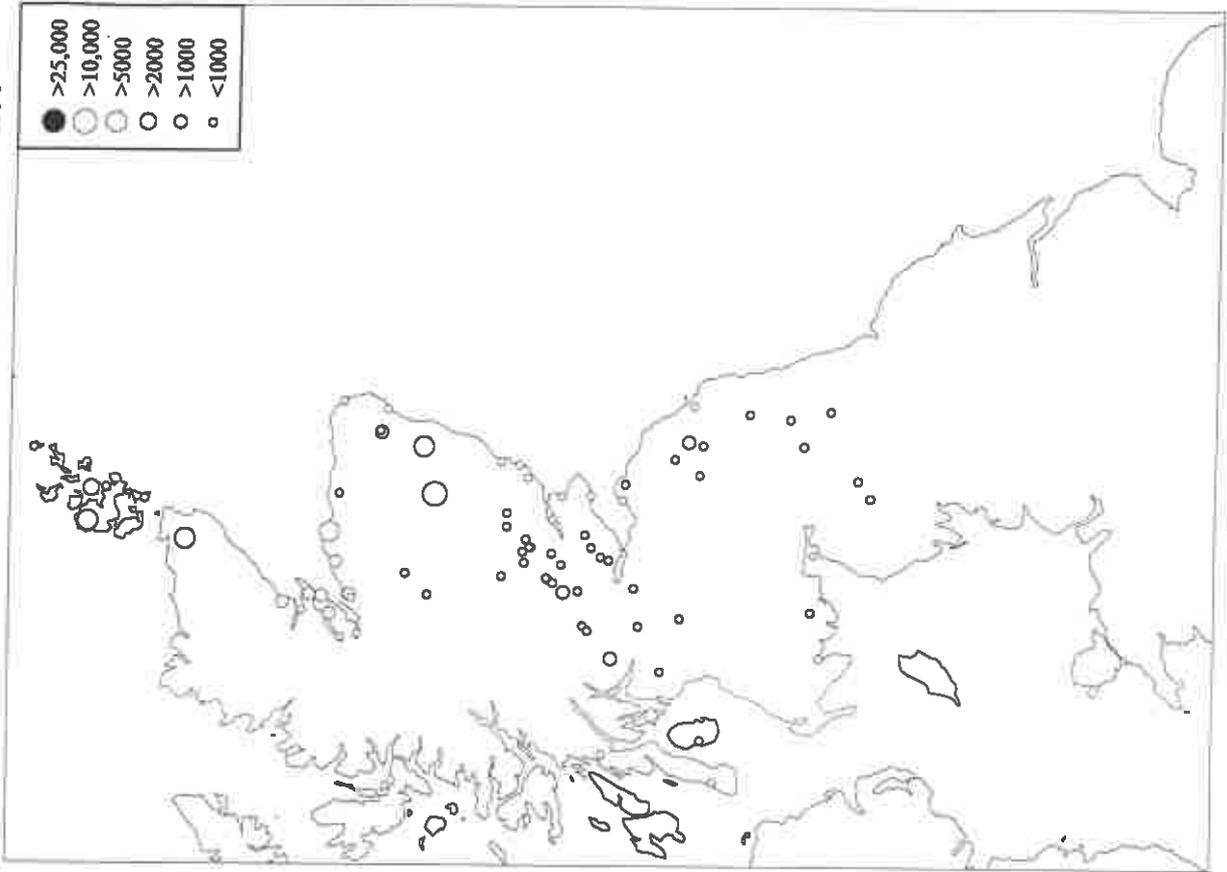


Figure 3b. The distribution of Greylag Geese in November 1996



Greylag Geese

In 1996, the October and November counts revealed the later arrival of Greylag Geese to their wintering quarters with an 84% increase between the two months. Notable concentrations in October 1996 were found in North-east Scotland (25.6% of the November population estimate) and North Scotland (principally Highland Region, 20.9%), with few birds reported from more southerly areas. By November, the groups were a little more dispersed, North Scotland accounting for 33.1% of the population whilst North-east Scotland supported 46.0% with marked increases in numbers occurring in Caithness, Moray and Kincardine & Deeside.

Table 2. Gross regional distribution of Pink-footed and Greylag Geese in Britain in October and November 1996, expressed as a percentage of the maximum count for each species.

| Area * | Pink-footed Goose | | Greylag Goose | |
|--|-------------------|------|---------------|-------|
| | Oct | Nov | Oct | Nov |
| North Scotland | 0.3 | 0.7 | 20.9 | 33.1 |
| North-east Scotland | 21.6 | 15.2 | 25.6 | 46.0 |
| East-central Scotland | 29.0 | 20.6 | 4.5 | 9.4 |
| South-east Scotland/North-east England | 26.9 | 4.4 | 1.8 | 5.7 |
| South-west Scotland/North-west England | 4.9 | 1.5 | 1.8 | 5.8 |
| West England | 16.0 | 12.1 | 0 | 0 |
| East England | 1.3 | 15.4 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100.0 | 69.9 | 54.6 | 100.0 |

* areas are defined as follows:
 North Scotland: Shetland, Orkney, Western Isles, Highland
 North-east Scotland: Grampian
 East-central Scotland: Tayside, Central, Fife
 South-east Scotland/North-east England: Lothian, Borders, Northumberland
 South-west Scotland/North-west England: Strathclyde, Dumfries & Galloway, Cumbria
 West England: Lancashire, Merseyside
 East England: Humberside, Lincolnshire, Norfolk

PRINCIPAL CONCENTRATIONS

Pink-footed Geese

Over 48% of the October total was found at only four sites: roosts in *South-west Lancashire* (37,500); *Loch of Strathbeg* (32,000); *West Water Reservoir* (25,000) and *Hule Moss* (19,400) (see Table 3). Overall, seven sites held more than 10,000 Pink-footed Geese and a further 16 sites held over 1000 birds; thus only 14 sites accounted for 90% of the October count. In total, 46 sites held over 10 Pink-footed Geese. A similar pattern was reported a month later with 57% of the November count found at only five sites: *South-west Lancashire* (28,450); *Loch of Strathbeg*, (26,980); *Snettisham* (16,890); *Montrose Basin*, (11,500); and *Loch Leven* (10,060). In all, Pink-footed Geese were recorded at 69 sites, either in October or November (Figures 2a & 2b), one less site than in 1995.

Table 3. Principal Pink-footed and Greylag Goose resorts counted in Autumn 1996. Columns show all counts from sites holding $\geq 1\%$ of the 1996 population estimate for each species (A,E), the site count as a proportion of census totals (B,F), and the site count as a proportion of average winter maxima from the previous five autumns (C,G). Five year peak mean counts (D) are calculated using all monthly counts (WeBS data) and *ad hoc* counts, thus these may appear larger than counts recorded in the autumn.

PINK-FOOTED GEESE

| October Census Total | 234,379 | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|------|-----|--------|
| | A | B | C | D |
| South-west Lancs/Merseyside | 37,500 | 16.0 | 120 | 31,215 |
| Loch of Strathbeg | 32,000 | 13.6 | 80 | 39,924 |
| West Water Reservoir | 25,000 | 10.6 | 80 | 31,127 |
| Hule Moss | 19,400 | 8.3 | 118 | 16,416 |
| Dùpplin Loch | 18,500 | 7.9 | 43 | 43,300 |
| Loch Leven | 18,100 | 7.7 | 92 | 19,574 |
| Meikle Loch, Slains | 17,400 | 7.4 | 117 | 14,825 |
| Montrose Basin | 8000 | 3.4 | 26 | 31,142 |
| Drummond Pond | 7000 | 3.0 | 228 | 2272 |
| Gladhouse Reservoir | 6200 | 2.6 | 202 | 3068 |
| Upper Cowgill Reservoir | 6060 | 2.6 | 130 | 4656 |
| Solway Estuary | 5429 | 2.3 | 34 | 15,983 |
| Carsebreck and Rhynd Lochs | 5400 | 2.3 | 52 | 10,474 |
| Fala Flow | 5000 | 2.1 | 74 | 6719 |
| Loch Tullybelton | 4658 | 2.0 | 132 | 3519 |
| Aberlady Bay | 4160 | 1.8 | 35 | 12,013 |

GREYLAG GEESE

| November census Total | 79,576 | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------|------|-----|--------|
| | E | F | G | D |
| Dinnet Lochs | 16,469 | 20.7 | 60 | 27,373 |
| Orkney (all sites) | 9338 | 11.7 | 210 | 4433 |
| Loch of Skene | 8756 | 11.0 | 81 | 10,840 |
| Loch Spynie | 5500 | 6.9 | 88 | 6276 |
| Cromarty Firth/Loch Eye | 5305 | 6.7 | 47 | 11,321 |
| Caithness | 5213 | 6.6 | 76 | 6880 |
| Haddo Country Park | 2570 | 3.2 | 59 | 4320 |
| Loch of the Clans | 1942 | 2.4 | - | - |
| Findhorn Bay | 1860 | 2.4 | 59 | 3179 |
| Bayfield Loch | 1650 | 2.1 | - | - |
| Isle of Bute | 1333 | 1.7 | 56 | 2395 |
| Loch Fleet | 1200 | 1.5 | 96 | 1254 |
| Loch Lomond (Endrick Mouth) | 1150 | 1.4 | - | - |
| Hirsel Lake | 1045 | 1.3 | - | - |
| Drummond Pond | 1021 | 1.3 | 32 | 3200 |
| Sites in Upper Tay | 971 | 1.2 | 23 | 4218 |
| Bermersyde Moss | 950 | 1.2 | - | - |
| Lower Bogrotten | 850 | 1.1 | 24 | 3600 |
| Caiston Quarry | 805 | 1.0 | - | - |

A - October site count

B - Site count as a percentage of October census

C - October site count as a percentage of five year mean (D)

D - Five Year peak mean (from WWT data)

E - November site count

F - Site count as a percentage of November census

G - November site count as a percentage of five year mean (D)

Among other counts received, notable maxima away from the census dates included: 41,680 in *South-west Lancashire* on 12 January 1997; 40,500 at *Dupplin Loch* on 5 October; 35,930 on 30 December 1996 and 32,540 on 6 January 1997 at *Snettisham*; 26,000 at *Holkham* on 16 December, 19,586 on the *Solway Estuary* on 16 March 1997 and 17,150 at *Montrose Basin* on 7 January 1997. Record numbers of Pink-footed Geese were recorded in *South-west Lancashire* during mid-winter (see above) and numbers steadily increased in Norfolk at the three principal roosts (*Snettisham*, *Scolt Head* and *Holkham*) to a combined peak of 55,500 on 20 December. Table 3 shows that *Dupplin Loch*, *Montrose Basin* and the *Solway Estuary* generally held fewer geese than the five year peak mean counts. However, *South-west Lancashire*, *Drummond Pond*, *Gladhouse Reservoir* and *Upper Cowgill Reservoir* all held above average numbers than in recent years.

Greylag Geese

In October, early arrivals had concentrated at *Loch of Skene* (12,876); sites in *Caithness* (5378); sites in *Orkney* (5045) and *Haddo Country Park* (4360), which together accounted for 35% of the November population estimate. In November, 53% of the total was found at only five sites: *Dinnet Lochs* (16,469); sites in *Orkney* (9338); *Loch of Skene* (8756); *Loch Spynie* (5500) and sites in *Caithness* (5213). Overall, 17 sites held more than 1000 birds and a further 58 sites held between ten and 1000 birds demonstrating the dispersed nature of this species when compared to Pink-footed Geese. In all, Greylag Geese were recorded at 88 sites in either October or November (Figures 3a & 3b) - a figure slightly lower than that recorded in 1995 (94 sites).

In addition to the census counts, the following counts were recorded: 26,185 (16 November), 19,890 (14 November) and 19,490 (18 November) at *Dinnet Lochs* (note, however, that the census count recorded only 16,469 on 10 November). Table 3 shows that, apart from sites in *Orkney*, the principal sites generally held fewer geese than the five year peak mean counts. *Dinnet Lochs* and, in particular, *Cromarty Firth/Loch Eye* held fewer geese than in recent years.

BREEDING SUCCESS

A total of 15,428 Pink-footed Geese was aged at various localities in Scotland and NW England during October and the first two weeks of November. Breeding success was reasonable with 18.8% young observed in sample flocks and mean brood size (2.41, $n=301$) was just above average (Table 4, Figure 4).

Fewer data were received for Greylag Geese than Pink-footed Geese and these were only from Scotland during the same period. Greylag breeding success was also reasonable, with 19.9% ($n=3237$) young observed in sample flocks and the mean brood size (2.63, $n=83$) was just above average (Table 4, Figure 4).

Additional data were received for both species from flock scans made after both before and after this sampling period. These data have not been included in the analysis above in order to maintain continuity with previous years, however the data collected will form part of a larger analysis investigating brood size changes during the winter months and into the spring.

Table 4. The proportion of young and average brood size in Pink-footed and Greylag Goose flocks in autumn 1996. Data collection period restricted to October and the first two weeks of November. (Regions are defined in Table 2).

| | Region | Total aged | % Young | no. of broods | Brood size |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| Pink-footed Goose | North-east Scotland | 7700 | 19.2 | 193 | 2.45 |
| | East-central Scotland | 4676 | 19.3 | 108 | 2.35 |
| | West England | 3052 | 16.8 | - | - |
| | Total | 15,428 | 18.8 | 301 | 2.41 |
| Greylag Goose | North Scotland | 679 | 20.2 | - | - |
| | North-east Scotland | 370 | 15.4 | 23 | 2.83 |
| | East-central Scotland | 2188 | 20.6 | 60 | 2.55 |
| | Total | 3237 | 19.9 | 83 | 2.63 |

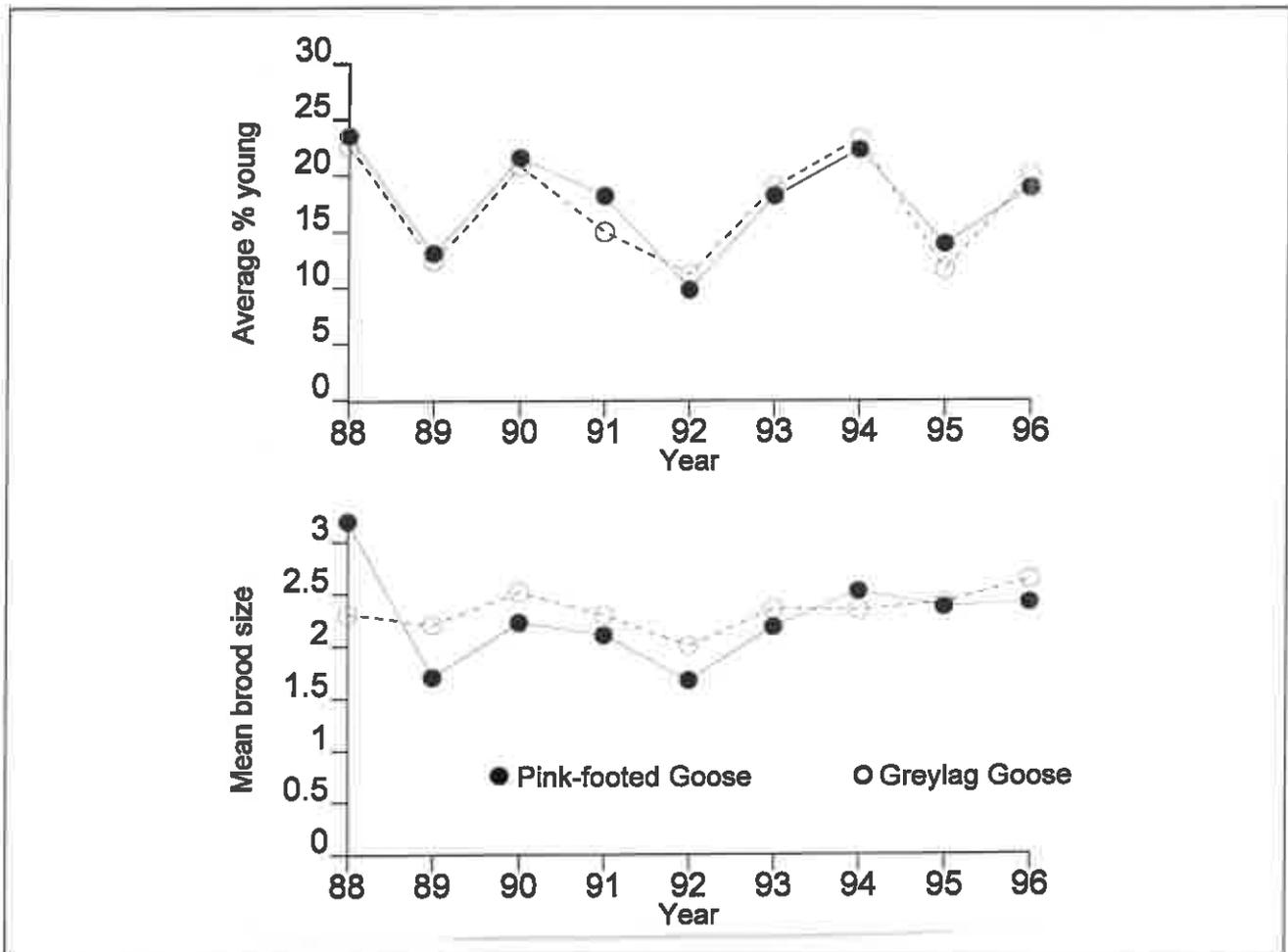


Figure 4. The proportion of young (top) and mean brood size (bottom) for Pink-footed Geese (closed symbols) and Greylag Geese (open symbols), recorded by WWT censuses, 1988 to 1996.

DISCUSSION

The October and November counts, made over single weekends and in reasonable goose counting conditions, provided accurate population estimates for both Pink-footed and Greylag Geese. The Pink-footed Goose population estimate has increased by c.35,000 birds since 1995, and **Figure 1** shows the population estimates for the period 1980-1996. After a period of steady increase from c.95,000 to c.225,000 birds between 1980 and 1991, the population has remained relatively stable at c.225,000 since 1991, despite annual variation (*eg* c.200,000 in 1992 and c.260,000 in 1994). **Figure 4** shows the five year running means based on the annual population estimates. The Pink-footed Geese arriving in South-east Scotland quickly moved on, perhaps due to a relatively clean harvest, and this is reflected in the early arrival of geese in both South-west Lancashire, Lothians and Borders and, later in Norfolk.

The Greylag Goose population estimate has fallen again, but only by c.3,000 geese. This can be compared to known hunting levels recently recorded in Iceland (see below). The October count of Greylag Geese comprised 58% of the November population estimate and shows the value of counting in both months. **Figure 1** reveals a period of decline between 1980 and 1984 (to a low of c.64,000), followed by a period of stability between 1985 and 1990 at c.100,000 birds. Since 1990, the population estimates have been slowly declining to the 1996 estimate of c.80,000. **Figure 4** shows the five year running means and the "smoothed" pattern follows that described above. The suggestion, based on the low 1991 and 1994 counts, that the number of Greylag Geese wintering in Britain was not increasing, perhaps suffering from intensive hunting pressure at certain sites, may now be borne out by the counts.

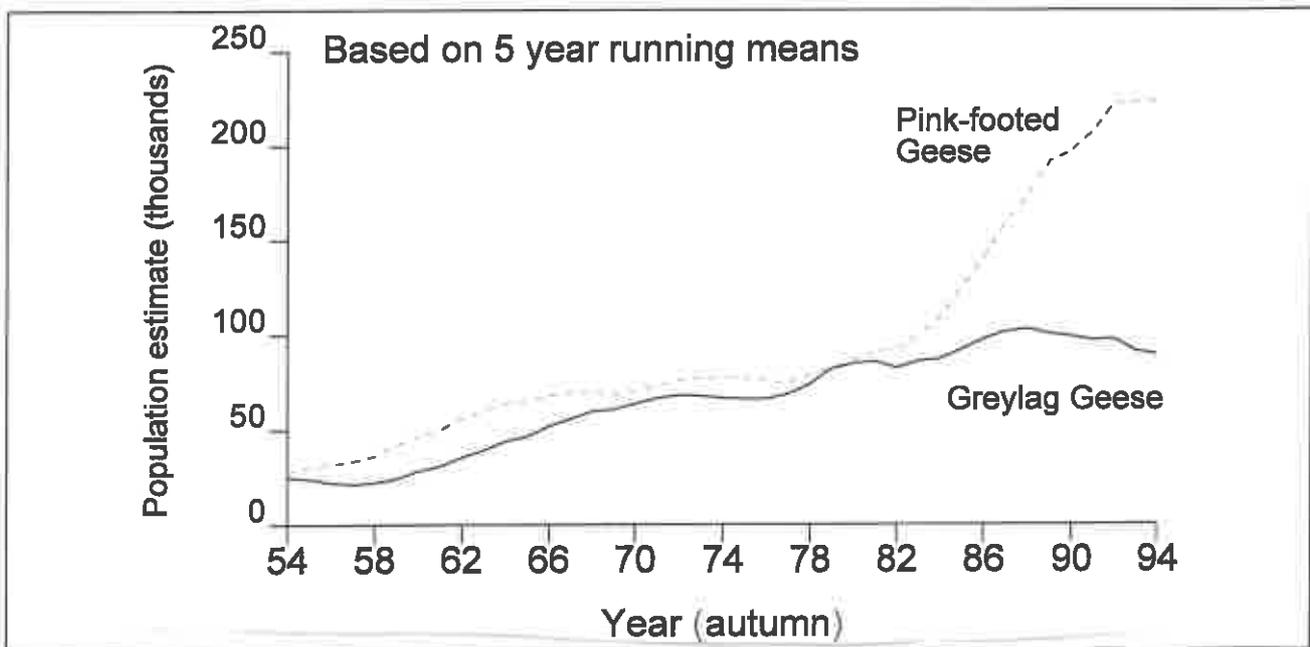


Figure 4 Pink-footed and Greylag Geese population trends based on five year running mean (thus the counts for 1994 is the average of the population estimates for 1992-1996).

Shooting bag statistics from Iceland

In 1994, the Icelandic Government introduced legislation requiring that all persons issued with a shotgun licence must complete (anonymously) a bag record card. In 1996, c.36,500 Greylag Geese and c.12,000 Pink-footed Geese were shot in Iceland (Arnór Sigfússon pers. comm.). These are very similar to the figures obtained in 1995 (c.35,000 Greylag and c.8,000 Pink-footed

Geese). Thus, there is now a degree between year validation of the first year totals. Such a heavy annual loss is impacting on the total population, albeit in a slow reduction in winter numbers. However, whether the annual loss is sustainable remains to be seen. There is an urgent need for continued surveillance of numbers in the autumn, and this is where the grey goose census plays a primary role in identifying long term trends. A dramatic reduction in numbers of Greylag Geese either locally, regionally or nationally can be identified and this information will be brought to the attention of Government. The summer ringing of both Pink-footed and Greylag Geese needs to be maintained in order to provide independent assessments of long-term changes in mortality estimates. Unfortunately there are no comparable bag statistics for grey geese (or any wildfowl) collected in Britain. We are therefore not in a position to assess how the winter kill in Britain affects the post hunting population total. This particular area needs to be addressed.

COLOUR-RINGED GEESE

Both Pink-footed and Greylag Geese continue to be marked with coloured rings. Most of the Pink-footed Geese caught in Britain have been marked at *Martin Mere* (Lancashire), *Loch Leven* (Kinross) and on the north Solway coast (Dumfriesshire). Greylag Geese have been marked at *Loch Eye* (Inverness-shire) and a small number at *Loch of Skene* (Aberdeenshire). In July 1996, over 300 Pink-footed and over 300 Greylag Geese were also ringed in north-central Iceland. Extra effort is being employed this year in order to locate marked grey geese on the winter quarters. Goose counters can contribute valuable sightings, and I would especially ask counters to look out for marked geese (and other wildfowl). Full ringing and sighting details will be forwarded in return.

The colours and codes to look out for are:

Pink-footed Geese:

Grey neck collars (2 or 3 characters)
White leg rings (3 letters)
Orange leg rings (3 letters)

Greylag Geese:

Grey neck collars (2 or 3 characters)
White leg rings (2 letters)
Orange leg rings (2 letters)
Green leg rings (2 letters)

Please send sightings of marked Greylag Geese to: Bob Swann, 14 St Vincent Road, Tain, Ross-shire.

and marked Pink-footed Geese (or any other wildfowl) to: *Colour-ring sightings* at Slimbridge

AUTUMN COUNTS 1997

The dates for the 1997 annual national census of Pink-footed and Greylag Geese have been set for:

11/12 October and 8/9 November.

If you did not received your counts forms in early September then please contact Slimbridge.

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21 October 1997

Errata

Ivan Brockway kindly pointed out an error I made in the calculation of the January and March 1996 counts of Pink-footed and Greylag Geese in Britain. Roost counts carried out in the Moray Firth area found fewer birds than those recorded during daytime feeding counts. The latter better represented the true number of birds present in the area. The corrected figures in Table 1 of that report should read:

| DISTRICT/REGION | JANUARY 1996 | | MARCH 1996 | |
|-----------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | Pink-footed Geese | Greylag Geese | Pink-footed Geese | Greylag Geese |
| Sutherland | 0 | 1000 | 0 | 212 |
| Ross & Cromarty | 4157 | 3576 | 12,321 | 2252 |
| Inverness/Nairn | 2850 | 350 | 695 | 1544 |
| | | | | |
| TOTAL | 145,837 | 58,715 | 105,242 | 46,976 |